

MAMARONECK UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT
MAMARONECK, NEW YORK

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION – CHATSWORTH AVENUE SCHOOL

Teacher: Nancy Nagle **Date:** December 7, 2006
Grade / Subject: Collaborative 1st Grade / Math Lesson

Objectives: Students will be able to:
 1. rote count and identify missing numerals to 50 or to 100, depending on individual skill level.

Pre-Observation Conference: December 7, 2007

During the pre-observation conference, Ms. Nagle explained that her focus was to provide direct instruction that would help identified students build number sense. She described the components of the lesson. First, Ms. Nagle intended to read aloud *One Hundred Hungry Ants* to focus the children on the concept of "100." The whole group work focused on the 100 Chart. Mrs. Nagle expected to direct the students to take turns locating and naming designated numbers, and then name and replace missing numbers. The final stage of the lesson was small group seatwork. The children were expected to practice this skill by completing individual number charts using concrete materials. The groups were differentiated by ability level. Each group worked with one of the teachers in the room.

Throughout the pre-observation session, Ms. Nagle focused on the students' individualized needs. She believes that differentiation is essential. Ms. Nagle clearly stated that students need: "to be recognized and respected for where they are; to develop strategies to build their own learning; and, to always, always feel successful."

Observation Patterns (Features to be Maintained):

The data collected reflect the following patterns:

- Ms. Nagle carefully attended to each student's individualized skill level throughout the large group segment of the lesson. Some children needed to use their fingers as number markers. Others required an adult to point to each number. Some independently called out the numbers without using their fingers at all.
- Structure and discipline are mainstays in this classroom. Ms. Nagle's routines are established. For example, she asked the children to take "two deep breaths" before the lesson began. "There is one. There is two. We are finished now." The clear directives allow children to understand defined boundaries and to successfully comply.
- Ms. Nagle neatly embedded varied review work into the current lesson. One example of this was when she handed out the children's laminated 100s charts. Ms. Nagle stated that she was going to "give Jack M. the striped one," only to hear the children say "no, that is the green one." The children's unanimous objections served two purposes. They build a collaborative, working community. They insured student success.
- It was important that each child have a turn to put in the missing number, and to name it. Ms. Nagle differentiated in several ways. Alex named the number 12. Ms. Nagle supported her by asking Alex to go back to number ten and count forward. At no point did Ms. Nagle do the work for Alex. Instead, she provided scaffolds as needed until Alex was successful. Garrett turned over his 100s chart and said the missing number in the fourth line.
- Ms. Nagle used questioning techniques beautifully. She easily differentiated the same lesson by using progressively higher questioning levels tailored to each child's needs.
- Finally, Ms. Nagle's sense of timing was excellent. The group work began at 1:45PM and ended at 2:02PM. The seatwork took an additional twenty minutes. This allowed Ms. Nagle to attend to each student individual as the group worked independently. The

children were given two to five minutes in the Lego area, as they completed their work. This gave them a stretch before the final, five-minute rug share.

Recommendations (Features to be Developed):

The data collected reflect the following patterns:

- Overall, the lesson was well executed. During the teaching segment, the children were completely engaged. The teacher aide and the teacher assistant were sitting on opposite sides of the rug, monitoring and helping individual children. One or two needed help with focus and pointing to numbers. Another needed direct instruction and reinforcement. Although there was a clear sense that all the adults knew their roles, it seemed that ancillary teachers played the role of keeping the children on task, rather than assisting in the teaching. Although I think it is important that Ms. Nagle control the flow of the teaching, this is an area where collaboration is essential. It is important that this collaboration work in two ways, a collaboration about the instruction and one about the assessment.
- Ms. Nagle focused her attention on the least able, and possibly most diverse students in the room. Although she did check in on the other two groups, Ms. Nagle knew that Mr. Cellabos and Mrs. Fitzgerald would competently handle the groups they had. The lessons are ongoing, and each adult in the room understands individual student learning patterns. Still, explicitly setting expectations and explicitly assessing the outcomes of the lessons for the groups are essential components in a collaborative environment such as this one. The direction should always come from the teacher, but input from all of the teachers in the room will provide a broader view of the children's learning.

Ms. Nagle provides a structured, classroom environment with an established, clearly defined set of boundaries. It is important to note that Ms. Nagle has a thorough, workable understanding of each student in her care. She talks knowledgeably about each student's ability level as well as the emotional and physical components that affect growth and development for each child. Although she freely shares these observations and the learning that supports her insights, it is essential that Ms. Nagle develop an openness and flexibility to the team approach. It is important that Ms. Nagle incorporate a balance of the collaborative team's perspectives and input provided by the building and district resources.

Post-Conference:

December 14, 2006

Ms. Nagle discussed the children's progress during the post-observation conference. She clearly loves the children in her care, and wants each of them to reach the height of her/his ability. We discussed the clear organization of the lesson, the attainment of specific goals, and the successful outcome. We also discussed extending the incredible collaborative team model that Ms. Nagle has developed with the first grade team into a more inclusive building and district model. Decisions about instruction, assessment, and behavior issues must have appropriate input from the building administration, the instructional team, and the district special education resource team.

Teacher's Signature:

Observer's Signature:

Paula S. Marston

Nancy Nagle

Date: *1/4/07*

Date: *1/4/07*

cc: Original -Personnel for District File; Ms. Nagle; Mr. Castar, Principal for Building File; Ms. Zimmer, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; Ms. Kramer, Director of Elementary Special Education; Teacher File, Special Education Office;

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Paula Marron

Date: 1/4/07

Observer's Signature:

Nancy Nagle

Date: 1/4/07

cc: Original -Personnel for District File; Ms. Nagle; Mr. Castar, Principal for Building File; Ms. Zimmer, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; Ms. Kramer, Director of Elementary Special Education; Teacher File, Special Education Office;

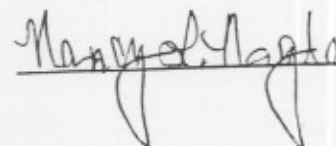
I did not sign this report.
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Nancy Nagle 1-9-07

Observation Response by Nancy Nagle, Special Education Teacher, Chatsworth School

Observation date: Dec. 7, 2006

Observer: Dr. Paula Marron, Assistant Principal, Chatsworth School

Response date: 01-03-07



Although there was a clear sense that all the adults knew their roles, it seemed that ancillary teachers played the role of keeping the students on task, rather than assisting in the teaching. Although Ms. Nagle is the key factor in the flow of the teaching, both instruction and assessment. The two other adults in the room have firsthand knowledge of particular students, and their input is invaluable.

~~The observer is commenting on the whole group portion of the lesson which was designed to be led by Nancy Nagle, the teacher being observed. It is common practice in classrooms with ancillary staff for the classroom teacher to lead whole group direct instruction. Prior to the lesson, the support staff had been an integral part of planning the content of the lesson and preparing the materials for teaching it. During the lesson, they were responsible for observing student learning behavior with close attention to their focus and distractibility. While Nancy N. was teaching the lesson, she was modeling the appropriate use of language and teaching strategies for the support staff to immediately put into use when working in small groups.~~

As needed, and on any given day, the ancillary staff is ready to switch roles with Nancy N. and lead the whole group lesson. A true team teaching approach exists between the members as they move in and out of lead and support roles in a fluid manner.

The other two adults were instructed to take notes during their small group work for a post-lesson assessment conversation with the lead teacher. This debriefing took place immediately following the lesson.

Ms. Nagle focused her attention on the least able and possibly the most diverse students in the room. This makes it hard to tune into the direct instruction happening in the other two groups. Explicit expectations and outcomes are suggested as they will allow each of the assistants to monitor all the students, and will also provide Ms. Nagle with a broader view of the children's learning.

The observer also makes the following comments that seem in direct contrast to the comment above:

It is important to note that Ms. Nagle has a thorough, workable understanding of each student in her care. She talks knowledgeably about each student's ability level, as well as, the emotional and physical components that affect growth and development for each child.

Further, the nature of the relationship between Nancy Nagle and her immediate staff is one of openness, respect, trust and reciprocity with a true team approach. The observer might not have seen the often used techniques of this strong team during her visit that day, but it is common for these three teachers to move from table to table, assisting and supporting one another in a seamless manner.

It is essential that Ms. Nagle develop an openness and a flexibility to the team approach. It is important that Ms. Nagle incorporate a balance of the collaborative team's perspectives and input provided by the building and district resources.

The observer claims that Nancy N. is not functioning effectively with her team and that she is under-responsive to input from administration. Nancy N. can provide, upon request, an assortment of e-mail copies that represent the almost daily attempt by Nancy N. to share communications from/to parents and to update team members and building and district administrators about student issues. This effort represents only one form of the constant flow of information and communication among and across team members. Nancy N. makes herself available to meet before school, after school, during lunch and on her own time in an effort to maintain and improve the quality of the collaborative program.

We also discussed extending the outstanding collaborative team model that Ms. Nagle has developed with the first grade team into a more inclusive building and district model.

Nancy N. is in the process of writing a SEPTA grant for funding that will address the needs involving community awareness regarding students with special needs in a regular education setting. Nancy N. has offered to speak in an open discussion with parents and/or regular education colleagues about the collaborative model.

Decisions about instruction, assessment and behavior issues must have appropriate input from the building administration, the instructional team, and the district special education resource team.

Since no specific examples are given, please clarify this statement and, further, how does this relate to a classroom observation?

note: I have distributed copies of this response to:

Personnel for District File

Steve Castor Principal for Building File

Annie Zimmer Asst. Supt. for Curriculum & Instruction

Roni Kramer Asst. Director of Special Education

Special Education Office Teacher File

Peter Berendt Director, Special Education

John Esposito, MTA President

MTA Representatives, Chatsworth Ave. School

Terry Donnellan

Darlene Adams

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